

South Dakota National Guard

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July 30, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SD Guard, Danish Home Guard partnership adds international perspective to officer training

By 1st Lt. Chad Carlson
SDNG Public Affairs Office

FORT MEADE, S.D. – National Guard Soldiers enrolled in the Officer Candidate School at Fort Meade this summer were trained in areas such as leadership skills and small unit tactics, skill sets they will need as future leaders. One other skill set, not traditionally taught but more relevant now than ever, was thrown into the training – working with allied partner nations.

This was accomplished as members of the Danish Home Guard, Denmark's equivalent to the National Guard, were in South Dakota, July 13-26, instructing future U.S. Army National Guard officers. Their role as OCS instructors was possible through the DoD Reserve Officers Foreign Exchange Program and from a growing relationship with the South Dakota Army National Guard.

"The Danish Home Guard has been forward leaning in trying to develop partnerships with other National Guard states," said Maj. Wyatt Hansen, administrative officer for the 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), SDARNG. "Their relationship with South Dakota is strong because of their involvement in our Golden Coyote training exercise. That relationship led to discussions about us conducting training in Denmark and then having Home Guard instructors over here."

So members of the 196th Regiment (RTI) traveled to Nymindégab Camp in Denmark, July 1-4, where they conducted U.S. Army Basic Instructor Course training with 15 members of the Danish Home Guard. The course, which trains Army instructors to deliver battle-focused training, set the stage for Danish officers to instruct officer candidates this summer at Fort Meade.

Following the training, three Danish Home Guard instructors were selected to represent Denmark for the first time at a U.S. OCS instructor podium, where they would teach officer candidates classes ranging from land navigation to troop leading procedures.

"The Danish instructors were a benefit to my class," said Officer Candidate Deidre Ross, of Rapid City. "It gave us a different perspective that made both classroom and field training more exciting and knowledgeable."

Hansen said OCS is the ideal course because Denmark, as a NATO nation, follows a lot of the same processes and procedures that candidates are trained on.

"For instance, operation orders are the same across all NATO countries," Hansen said. "Operation orders and troop leading procedures are key pieces in OCS. The non-specificity of a leadership school like OCS makes it a great fit for instructors from other nations."

While phase one of OCS concluded July 26, the South Dakota and Danish instructors are already looking into additional opportunities to cross-train through various exchanges.

“This is the first step; us coming over here and testing the waters so-to-speak,” said Danish Home Guard 1st Lt. Jannick B. Reumann, head of training and operations in Denmark’s Copenhagen Westside District and one of the instructors who taught in South Dakota. “We also have an instructor course that we would like to present to your instructors. I believe we all could gain from cooperating with each other and through these exchanges we can inspire each other.”

Hansen said that the 196th would like to send a few instructors to training in Denmark, conduct the U.S.-based instructor training in Denmark every other year, and ultimately see the South Dakota National Guard partner with the Danish Home Guard to conduct military training in another country.

Exchanges like these are the result of the DoD Reserve Officers Foreign Exchange Program, which provides National Guard and Reserve officers training associated with mobilization duties while enhancing their ability to work and communicate with the military individuals of the host nation.

“When you have been instructing in Denmark for years, that system is the only system you know,” said Danish Home Guard 2nd Lt. Pia Hjort, chief instructor in Denmark’s Southeast Jutland District. “The opportunity to come over here and see something totally different opens your eyes and gives you new inspiration on how to do things.”

“It’s a measuring process,” said Danish Home Guard 2nd Lt. Karsten Falck, an instructor in Denmark’s Foueu District. “If we compare our system to yours, we can find out where we have strengths and weaknesses compared to yours, and hopefully will take some of your strengths home with us and incorporate them.”

The instructors concluded their trip to South Dakota with the course completion ceremony held at Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

“It’s been a delight, both personally and professionally,” said Reumann. “We were well received by our American counterparts, they’ve gone out of their way for us and I will certainly recommend this experience to my colleagues back home.”

While the Danish instructors were happy with the training and experience they received, they hope the officer candidates took away more than the materiel presented during the two weeks of training.

“Maybe it will open up their world,” said Reumann. “Eventually, they will deploy. They will be in an international environment. I hope at least that this experience, in seeing us instruct here, will have them meet their international partners with an open mind and professional respect.”

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140722-Z-FO377-026: Danish Home Guard 2nd Lt. Karsten Falck instructs U.S. Army National Guard officer candidates, July 22, 2014, at Fort Meade, S.D. Falck, along with 14 other Danish Home Guard instructors, completed U.S. Army Basic Instructor Course training, July 1-4, in Denmark through a DoD Officers Foreign Exchange Program, in cooperation with the South Dakota Army National Guard. Danish Home Guard instructors were then selected to come to South Dakota to serve as Officer Candidate School instructors, July 13-26. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Chad Carlson/Released)



140716-Z-ZZ999-001: Danish Home Guard 1st Lt. Jannick B. Reumann instructs a U.S. Army National Guard officer candidate on land navigation, July 16, 2014, at Fort Meade, S.D. Reumann, along with 14 other Danish Home Guard instructors, completed U.S. Army Basic Instructor Course training, July 1-4, in Denmark through a DoD Officers Foreign Exchange Program, in cooperation with the South Dakota Army National Guard. Danish Home Guard instructors were then selected to come to South Dakota to serve as Officer Candidate School instructors, July 13-26. (Courtesy photo/Released)



140716-Z-ZZ999-002: Danish Home Guard 2nd Lt. Pia Hjort instructs a U.S. Army National Guard officer candidates on land navigation, July 16, 2014, at Fort Meade, S.D. Hjort, along with 14 other Danish Home Guard instructors, completed U.S. Army Basic Instructor Course training, July 1-4, in Denmark through a DoD Officers Foreign Exchange Program, in cooperation with the South Dakota Army National Guard. Danish Home Guard instructors were then selected to come to South Dakota to serve as Officer Candidate School instructors, July 13-26. (Courtesy photo/Released)



140630-Z-ZZ999-001: Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) traveled to Nymindegab Camp in Denmark, July 1-4, to conduct U.S. Army Basic Instructor Course training to 15 members of the Danish Home Guard. The course, which trains Army instructors to deliver battle-focused training, set the stage for Danish officers to instruct U.S. Army National Guard officer candidates this summer at Fort Meade, S.D. (Courtesy photo/Released)

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